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Eighteth session

Summary record the first part (public)* of the 2166th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 15 March 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Amor

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* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document CCPR/C/SR.2166/Add.1.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the eightieth session of the Human Rights Committee.

Adoption of the agenda (CCPR/C/152)

2. *The agenda was adopted.*

Organizational and other matters

Adoption of the programme of work

3. **The Chairperson** drew the Committee's attention to the tentative programme of work for the session.

4. **Mr. Schmidt** (Secretary of the Committee) said that all the States parties originally scheduled to report at the eightieth session would appear. Since the previous session, reports had been received from Albania, Benin, Morocco and Poland and were expected shortly from Brazil, Bulgaria, Greece and Iceland. A further campaign of reminders to late submitters had been conducted. A series of lunchtime briefings by non-governmental organizations would be held during the session concerning the States parties reporting.

5. There were over 300 communications pending under the Optional Protocol to the Covenant, more than ever before. A total of 41 draft decisions, including 20 carried over from the seventy-ninth session and 21 to be forwarded from the pre-sessional Working Group, were ready for the Committee's consideration at the current session.

6. In terms of staffing, the secretariat had a new staff member dealing with Spanish-language communications and a new Junior Professional Officer to work on article 40-related issues. The General Assembly at its latest session had approved a regular-budget P-5 post for the Chief of the Petitions Unit, which was soon to be advertised, and it was envisaged to add a regular-budget P-4 post to the Petitions Unit.

7. **Mr. Scheinin** recalled that several years earlier the Committee had tried the experiment of urging States parties with overdue reports and serious human rights problems to submit promptly either their regular report or a special report. He proposed that the Committee should look again at the States parties that were late in reporting, and if there was reliable information that they had derogated from the Covenant, in line with General Comment No. 29, the Committee should ask for prompt submission of the report or submission of a special report.

8. **The Chairperson** said that he would submit the proposal to the Bureau.

9. *The programme of work was adopted.*

Report of the Chairperson/Rapporteur of the pre-sessional Working Group

10. **Mr. Shearer**, speaking as Chairman/Rapporteur of the Working Group on Communications, said that the Working Group had been able to consider 24 of the 26 draft recommendations and decisions placed before it by the Secretariat. It had declared three communications admissible and had adopted 21 recommendations for transmittal to the Committee. In addition, it had issued requests for interim measures of protection in two urgent death penalty cases that had been filed against a State party while the Working Group had been meeting.

Meeting with representatives of non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations

11. On being invited by the Chairperson to engage in a dialogue with the Committee, **Mr. Heiber** (Amnesty International), **Ms. Hermoso Borges** (International Labour Organization) and **Ms. Baird** (Worldwide Organization for Women) said that they were not prepared to make a statement at that time, but would be available to answer questions about their written briefings.

12. **The Chairperson** said that the Committee attached great importance to an interactive dialogue with non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, which was the tradition in Geneva. It enabled the Committee to ask questions, obtain clarification and make comments on the written briefings. Perhaps the organizations based in New York should be given more information, so that they could take better advantage of the opportunity offered.

13. **Mr. Bhagwati** noted that the earlier the Committee members received written briefings from the non-governmental organizations the more readily they could discuss them and the more use they could

make of them when considering reports submitted by States parties.

14. **Sir Nigel Rodley** said that the absence of non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations at the present session in New York once again raised the question of venue. Non-governmental organizations with specific expertise were generally able to attend in Geneva, but were not able to send their experts when the Committee was meeting in New York.

15. **Mr. Solari Yrigoyen** said that non-governmental organizations should bear in mind that the official languages of the Committee were English, French and Spanish. If reports were submitted in all three languages by those organizations with multilingual capability it would certainly expedite their consideration by the non-English-speaking Committee members.

16. **Mr. Ando** said that late submission of reports by non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations was an obstacle to a lively discussion, but noted that some of the information they had available was confidential, and they might hesitate to divulge it in a public meeting. In Geneva, such meetings were closed.

17. **The Chairman** said that there might yet be an opportunity for such an exchange.

The public part of the meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.